

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 291010Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3305

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 1566

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, UR, YO

SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV FONMIN TALKS IN DAMASCUS AND CAIRO

REF: DAMASCUS 1437

1. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR PEKIC GAVE ME RUNDOWN APRIL 28
ON RECENT VISITS TO CAIRO AND DAMASCUS BY YUGOSLAV FONMIN
MINIC.

2. MINIC HAD BROUGHT FOLLOWING COUNSEL TO BOTH ASAD AND
SADAT:

A. URGENT NEED TO INCREASE ARAB UNITY, FIRST
THROUGH RECONCILING DAMASCUS AND CAIRO AND SECONDLY,
THROUGH MINIMIZING OTHER INTRA-ARAB FRICTIONS AS THOSE
DIVIDING CAIRO-TRIPOLI AND DAMASCUS-BAGHDAD. SUCH QUARRELS
ONLY RELIEVE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL AND TEMPT IT TO REMAIN IMMOBILE
AT TIME WHEN ALL PARTIES MUST MOVE TO CREATE FAVORABLE
NEGOTIATING ATMOSPHERE AT GENEVA.

B. EGYPT AND SYRIA SHOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR MILITARY
CAPABILITIES TO MAXIMIZE CREDIBILITY OF THAT OPTION AS THEY
CONTINUE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION. MINIC URGED

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SADAT TO IMPROVE HIS TIES WITH MOSCOW IN ORDER TO INCREASE

THE ARMS FLOW, AT SAME TIME WARNING HIM TO MAINTAIN HIS INDEPENDENCE OF MOSCOW.

C. DEVELOP CAREFULLY COORDINATED AND REASONABLE BARGAINING POSITIONS FOR MEPC. IN THIS REGARD MINIC CAUTIONED THE SYRIANS AGAINST CONTINUING TO PRESS FOR ISRAEL'S EXPULSION FROM UN. HE SAID TIME NOT RIPE FOR SUCH AN EFFORT; ARABS RATHER SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON BUILDING SUPPORT FOR APPLICATION OF UN CHARTER PROVISION FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL.

D. KEEP CHANNELS OPEN TO BOTH GENEVA CO-SPONSORS. MINIC EMPHASIZED THAT IN DEALING WITH THE USG IN THE WAKE OF THE REVERSES WASHINGTON HAD SUFFERED IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, NEITHER DAMASCUS NOR CAIRO SHOULD ASSUME THESE SETBACKS IMPLIED US WEAKNESS IN DEALING WITH THE ME PROBLEM. EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY EGYPT AND SYRIA SHOULD AVOID IMPUTING SUCH WEAKNESS TO THE US IN ANY PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS OF US ME POLICY. (PEKIC NOTED THAT WHILE SYRIA IS CONSIDERABLY LESS SOPHISTICATED ABOUT US POLICY THAN CAIRO, ASAD SAID HE FULLY AGREED WITH THE WISDOM OF THIS ADVICE AND ADDED HE WANTED CLOSER TIES WITH WASHINGTON.)

E. INVITE NON-ALIGNED REPRESENTATIVES TO GENEVA IN ORDER TO LIMIT POLARIZATION AT MEPC INSOFAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO DO SO. (PEKIC COMMENTED THAT AT NO POINT HAD MINIC URGED BELGRADE BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. SADAT'S CALL FOR BOTH BELGRADE AND DELHI TO PARTICIPATE HAD BEEN MADE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION IN EITHER CAPITAL.)

3. ACCORDING TO PEKIC, SADAT TOLD YUGO FONMIN THAT HE WOULD PERSEVERE IN SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION. GENEVA WAS THE NEXT SETTING TO TRY; IF THAT FAILED HE WOULD PURSUE SOLUTION AT UNSC AND UNGA. FAILING ANY POSITIVE RESULTS AT UN, HE WOULD THEN HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RESUME WAR. SADAT MENTIONED NO TIME LIMIT FOR THESE SUCCESSIVE STAGES. ASAD, FOR HIS PART, ALSO EXPRESSED HIS INTENTION TO PURSUE A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

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4. ASAD HAD DWELT AT LENGTH ON CONTINUED ME MILITARY IMBALANCE. HE ASSERTED THAT THANKS TO US RESUPPLY ISRAEL WAS NOW TWICE AS STRONG AS IT HAD BEEN JUST

PRIOR TO THE OCTOBER WAR. WHILE SYRIA WAS BETTER ARMED THAN IN OCTOBER 1973, IT WAS IN NO SENSE A MATCH FOR ISRAEL AND THE COMBINED EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN FORCES REMAINED INFERIOR. ASAD ASKED MINIC TO HAVE TITO INTERCEDE WITH BREZHNEV DURING LATTER'S UPCOMING VISIT TO BELGRADE, TO STEP UP MILITARY SUPPLIES TO SYRIA.

5. SADAT TOLD MINIC THAT CAIRO WOULD NOT HESITATE TO COME TO SYRIA'S AID IF IT WAS THE VICTIM OF AN ISRAELI ATTACK.

6. PEKIC OBSERVED THAT MOSCOW APPEARED TO BE MAKING ENCOURAGING GESTURES TOWARDS WASHINGTON, BY UNDERLINING THE NEED FOR CAREFUL PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEPC AS WELL AS BY GROMYKO'S SPEAKING IN KHADDAM'S PRESENCE OF SOVIET READINESS PARTICIPATE IN GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL. PEKIC CONCLUDED WITH PLEA THAT USG FROM ITS SIDE KEEP CHANNELS OPEN TO BOTH DAMASCUS AND CAIRO DURING THIS CRITICAL PERIOD. "IT IS VITAL THAT NEITHER LEADER BE ALLOWED TO THINK THAT HE CAN GET EFFECTIVE SUPPORT ONLY FROM MOSCOW." I REPLIED THAT WE WILL CONTINUE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ASAD AND SADAT. MURPHY

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